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ABSTRACT

A demographic, economic, and educational profile of South Carolina is provided in this report. Findings indicate that the state is characterized by a sharp contrast between metropolitan development and rural poverty, advancement in educational improvement, and economic growth. The 1984 Educational Improvement Act was found to have made little impact on the core problems of rural poverty, at-risk children, a poorly educated adult population, and an inequitable job structure. Four tables, one figure, and five maps are included. (14 references) (LMI)

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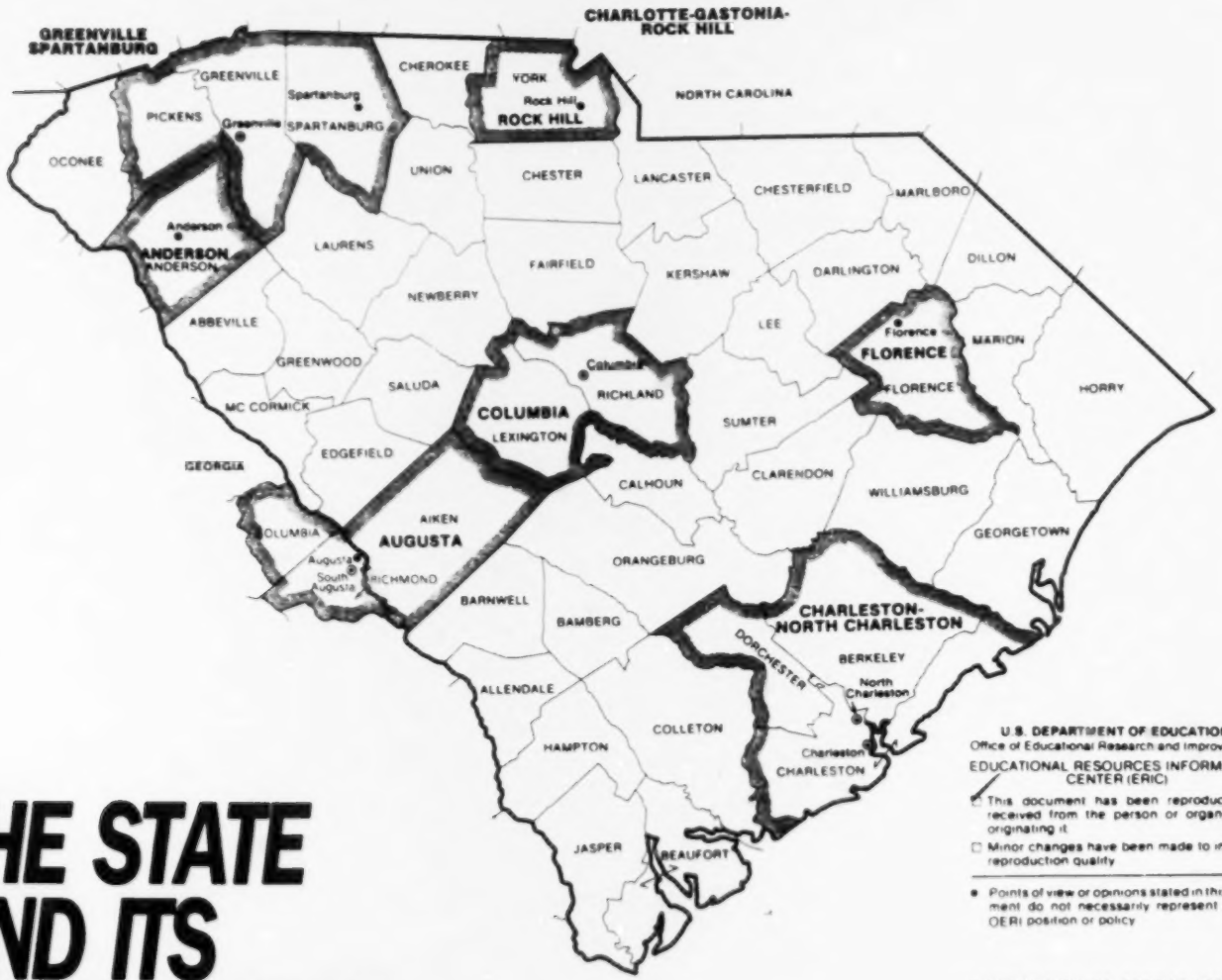

THE STATE AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

BY HAROLD L. HODGKINSON

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COVER NOTE:

The cover map makes clear the South Carolina metropolitan areas, especially those that overlap into Georgia—Augusta and North Carolina—Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill (see MSA map page 4). Unlike many southern states, the capital is located almost in the middle of the state, which provides numerous advantages. We can also see that there are large areas not included in the metro areas, resulting in 40 percent of the population living in "non-metro" areas, mostly rural. Population "maps" can be very useful to people including planners, marketers—and educators looking for the human equivalent of rivers, forests and mountains.

SOUTH CAROLINA:
THE STATE AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

HAROLD L. HODGKINSON
Director
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SOUTH CAROLINA: THE STATE AND ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Although every state has its unique aspects, the history and development of South Carolina has more claim to uniqueness than most. "The South" as an idea was virtually created in South Carolina. South Carolina was the first state to sign the Ordinance of Secession in 1860, the first firing at Fort Sumter, the most profitable slave-based economy, first in rice/indigo and then in cotton, all in the Charleston lowland swamps, and first in creating a "blueblood" aristocracy virtually identical to that in Boston. One of the best summaries of the state's history concludes that for over 250 years, preoccupation with race . . . "not only subordinated other political issues, but for most of the period stunted the growth of the state economically, culturally and intellectually and forced thousands of the most ambitious natives of the state to seek their fortunes elsewhere."* The major concern seemed less a long hatred of blacks and more of an interest in maintaining the aristocracy.

The contrast is best seen in the tense, military-style enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi and Governor Wallace's "They Shall Not Pass" speech, to the peaceful reception of Harvey Gantt when he became the first black student to enroll at Clemson University in 1963, thanks in part to the skillful efforts of then-Governor Ernest Hollings. Indeed, today South Carolina's leadership seems more interested in solving serious social and economic problems than it is in refighting the Civil War. The "action" today includes not only Charleston, still a unique and aristocratic city and Columbia, the state's banking, education and government center but also Piedmont, Greenville and Spartanburg, nestled next to Interstate 85, and the largest "suburban growth corridor" in the state, including new businesses, shopping centers and housing developments. Charleston has both the Spoleto Festival, celebrating the European heritage as well as the most diverse array of film, jazz and folk performances, and the St. Cecelia Society which guards Charleston's upper class traditions as carefully as it did in 1762.

As is true of many southern states, South Carolina lacked a large middle class for much of its history. Even today, the wealthy aristocrats and the poor are over-represented in the state while the middle income people (and jobs) are hard to find. In addition, blacks represent about 30 percent of the state's population, and 44 percent of its school-age youth, some of the highest rates in the south. (During the glory days of the rice-cotton economy—fueled by slaves—blacks were more than half the population of South Carolina, which explains some of the sustained reluctance to giving them the franchise.) Although it seems obvious today, no state can thrive and prosper if 40 percent plus of its citizens are poorly educated and live much of their lives in poverty. (If one adds white poverty to that, far more than half of South Carolina's citizens have been poor, which has been true for virtually the entire history of the state.)

As the 1980s began, it was clear that South Carolina needed to do something spectacular to deal with a constantly sagging economy, low educational levels, major health problems and high crime rates, plus one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the nation. More than any other state, it has opted for a strategy based on education as the centerpiece for comprehensive development, in the form of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984. The function of this report is not to evaluate the reforms proposed and implemented in South Carolina, it is too soon for such analysis. What this report can do is to provide the demographic context in which the reforms have taken place, which will allow for some comments about future opportunities.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S DEMOGRAPHY

To begin, we need to look at the basic demographic data provided by the United States Census Bureau. Some basic categories as well as ranks are presented in Table 1 on page 2.

*Quoted in N. Peirce and J. Hagstrom, *The Book of America*, 1984.

Table 1
SOUTH CAROLINA'S PROFILE AND STATE RANK

		Rank	
Total Population, 1989	3,512,000	25th	
Population Increase, 1980–89	+12.5%	16th	
Population Projection, 2000	3,906,000	24th	
Percent of the Population:			
Under Age 18, 1988	27.3%	13th	
Age 65 and over, 1988	10.9%	37th	
Black Adults, 1988	693,000	16th	
Hispanic Adults, 1988	15,000	36th	
Percent of the Population Living in Metro Areas, 1988	60.5%	31st	
Births (per 1,000 population), 1987	15.4	20th	
Percent of Births to:			
Unmarried Women, 1987	29.0%	6th	
Teenagers, 1987	16.6%	9th	
Infant Deaths (per 1,000 live births), 1987	12.7	2nd	
Life Expectancy Rate	71.8 years	49th	(L.A. 50th)
Violent Crime Rate (per 100,000 population), 1988	741	8th	
Change in Crime Rate, 1987–88	+4.9%	6th	
Total Prisoners, 1988	13,745		
Percent of the Population Who Voted in 1988	38.9%	49th	
Social Security Recipients (as a percent of the population), 1988	14.9%	34th	
Food Stamp Recipients (as a percent of the population), 1988	7.3%	18th	
Change in Non-Agricultural Employment, 1980–88	+21.8%	14th	
Service Jobs (as a percent of all jobs), 1988	17.7%	48th	
Unionized Manufacturing Jobs (as a percent of all jobs), 1988	3.1%	49th	
Increase in Retail Sales, 1982–88	+43.5%	18th	
Motor Vehicle Deaths (per 100,000 population), 1987	31.7	2nd	
Miles of Travel per Road Mile, 1987	476	25th	
Energy (percent nuclear), 1987	61.0%	3rd	
Bank Deposits Per Capita, 1987	$3,989	50th	
Disposable Per Capita Income, 1988	$11,102	41st	
Change, 1980–88 (in 1982 dollars)	+19.0%	16th	
Per Capita Expenditure, State and Local governments, 1987	$2,121	42nd	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990* and *CENDATA*, the on-line data base maintained by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

What one sees from this forest of numbers is a state that since 1980 has made a strenuous and usually successful effort to move from the bottom to the middle in terms of state ranks. Some things can be done relatively quickly (increase the number of new jobs) while other things seem to take a lot longer (reduce the crime rate).

The population is gradually increasing, due both to some net in-migration and a reasonable birth rate. (However, the spectacularly short life expectancy in the state needs serious analysis.) The state has a higher proportion of young people in its population than the nation as a whole, and many fewer older adults. A large percentage of citizens are black, much larger than most other southern states. (Forty-five percent of South Carolina's public school students are minority compared to 32 percent in North Carolina and 39 percent in Georgia.) Although metro populations generally have been growing, 40 percent of South Carolina's people live outside of the state's seven metropolitan areas. (One unfortunate thing about Census data is that we are told little about "non-metro" populations. Non-metro is definitely not the same as "rural.") Thus, there is little we can learn about this 40 percent of South Carolina's people from national data.

While the birth rate is middle range, **a VERY high percentage of children born in the state are born at risk; first, of dying in the first year of life; second, of having a teenage mother; third, of having unmarried parents.** Almost a third of South Carolina's children are born out-of-wedlock, a very high figure. (Although it is no secret, the U.S. rate of out-of-wedlock births is now 24.5 percent of all children born, a figure which should generate great concern but does not. It is sad but true that the abortion debate has left us with little energy and concern for the children who ARE born.) If you add to these numbers the very high number of auto fatalities as well as the high rate of violent crime, you have some of the reasons behind the very short life expectancy of South Carolinians. (And the state's 13,745 prisoners cost the taxpayers $274 million a year just to maintain—enough money to make a big difference in other urgent state spending priorities. The only known way to reduce the crime rate is to increase the educational level of a state's citizens, but it takes longer than most politicians can wait.)

Although many good things have happened to South Carolina in the eighties, it is still discouraging to realize that only 38.9 percent of the state's registered voters went to the polls in November, 1988. (Only Georgia was lower at 38.8 percent.) Until the people truly feel that it is THEIR government, participation will be low. It is yet unclear whether or not the educational reform effort has had this effect. It is clear that the more educated people are, the more they vote, and the older people are the more they vote. Given South Carolina's large population of non-voting youth, and large population of poorly educated adults, we may have some of the components of the low voter turnout.

Poverty and dependency are concentrated in the state's young population as well; compared to other states, a small percentage of citizens are on Social Security, while the state ranks much higher on food stamp recipients compared to other states. (Food stamp recipients tend to be young families.) It also seems that poverty rates are higher in the non-metro areas of the state—rural poverty remains the most tenacious kind of poverty, due to low educational levels, the lack of small business starts, job availability, access to needed social services and to what might be called media invisibility.

On the job front, South Carolina has made major progress in creating jobs, up 21.8 percent during 1980–88 and ranking 14th in the nation. However, the "high end" of the services—business services, financial services, computer services, insurance, real estate—are poorly represented in the state. While the state has developed some jobs in the service industry, they tend to be tourism-related (janitors, maids, waiters-waitresses, clerks) which does not move the average pay level up as one might wish. The state ranked eighth in the percentage of manufacturing jobs in 1986. Again, because only three percent of the state's jobs involved collective bargaining through union representation, average pay levels are lower than one might expect from the increased job numbers during the eighties. Ironically, low wage rates are an incentive to attract new businesses as well as a repellant to new workers!

Although some of the fluctuations in the manufacturing economy are calming down in 1990, this is not true for textiles, machine tooling establishments and wood products, which will continue to have a rollercoaster ride in the 1990s, and the South Carolina economy will be along for the ride. Since Governor Hollings, the strategy has been to entice EXISTING industries to relocate in South Carolina—low wages, right to work, and tax abatements were all successfully used in this strategy. What is missing from the strategy is the incubation of *locally developed* businesses and jobs that have the capacity to expand and move people into middle-income status. Educational improvements now underway should make this strategy more viable in the 1990s.

In some ways, the best economic news is the increase in retail sales during 1982–88, up 43.5 percent and ranking 18th in the nation. (That's 18th in *increase*, not in sales.) The reason is obvious—disposable per capita income went up 19 percent from 1980–88, ranking 16th in the nation in *increase*. (However, in actual per capita income, the state ranked 41st in 1988, meaning that the efforts have gotten South Carolina comfortably off the bottom but not yet at the middle in terms of per capita income.) The irony here is that people are buying, not SAVING—the state is 50th in bank deposits per person. Over the long pull, this very low savings rate will act as a drag on many other reform efforts funded through the investment of savings by banks and other lending institutions. By

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1987, state and local government per capita expenditures ranked 42nd, up from 44th in 1986. Increased personal savings could well increase the efficiency of this government investment in the future, as well as the stability of family, local and state economies. Personal savings is a form of venture capital.

Two other issues need brief discussion. The first is the state's long love affair with anything nuclear, starting with the AEC Savannah River nuclear plant in Aiken and Barnwell counties in 1950, and extending during the following decades. At one time South Carolina was the dump for 85 percent of the nation's nuclear waste, and plutonium and tritium are still reprocessed in South Carolina. In 1987, 61 percent of the state's energy production was nuclear, ranking third. Even with former Governor Riley's courageous decision after Three Mile Island to reverse this addiction to things nuclear, there are still many problems remaining. On the other hand, it was a major source of much-needed federal money. (The only competition was the amazing ability of the late Mendel Rivers as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee to bring military installations into his native Charleston.) While progress has been made, the state's nuclear dependency is still far too high.

The second area of concern is the extraordinarily high rate of motor vehicle deaths in the state, ranking 2nd in 1987 (and 4th in 1986) even though the state ranked 25th in miles of travel per mile of road in 1987. Having driven through much of South Carolina, the roads do not seem to be especially hazardous in terms of hairpin turns, lack of shoulders, etc. Nor is the weather a good explanation. The rest of the vehicular profile looks fairly normal, except for vehicle miles per licensed driver, where South Carolina ranked 9th (California, amusingly enough, ranked 24th in the same year, 1986. Number one was, of course, Wyoming.) Every driver in South Carolina drives a LOT of miles every day. But they do not speed—an earlier study shows the state 40th in people driving over the speed limit. Every state knows the number of speeders from airplane and helicopter surveys, even if no one knows your name or license number. Can there be that many drunk drivers in the state? The data are very shaggy on that point. But the state has more *poorly educated* drivers than any other state, as the following paragraph will explain.

The very low life expectancy rate in South Carolina is a combination of things, including the high rate of motor vehicle deaths, the large number of infants who do not survive the first year of life, as well as medical care which is heavily used but not well distributed to the non-urban areas where 40 percent of the people live. The high rate of accidental death in addition to motor vehicles has to do with the fact that the state was number one in adults with less than eight years of elementary school education in 1980--unable to read the labels on household products containing dangerous materials, highway signs, etc. Cancer and heart death rates are not unusually high, suggesting that the air and water are not killing people, and suicide rates also are fairly low. Odd as it may sound, EDUCATION may be the best route to increasing life expectancy in South Carolina, as ignorance is the key cause of short life spans in the state. "Graduate from high school so that you'll live longer" sounds peculiar, but is fully supported by the facts for this state.

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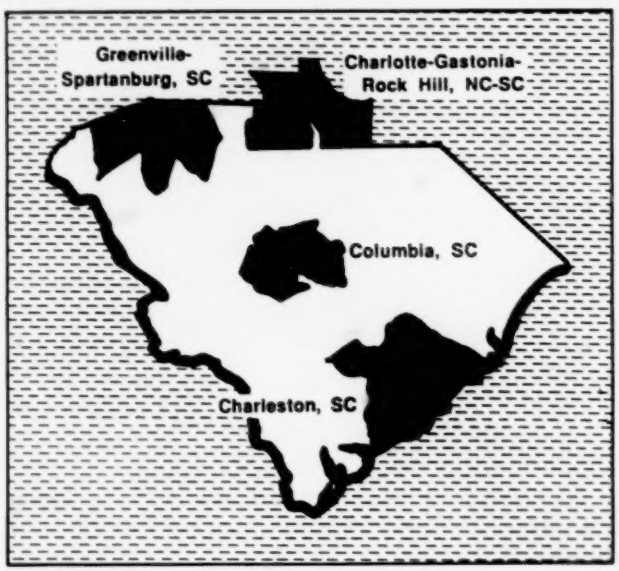
SOUTH CAROLINA'S METROPOLITAN AREAS

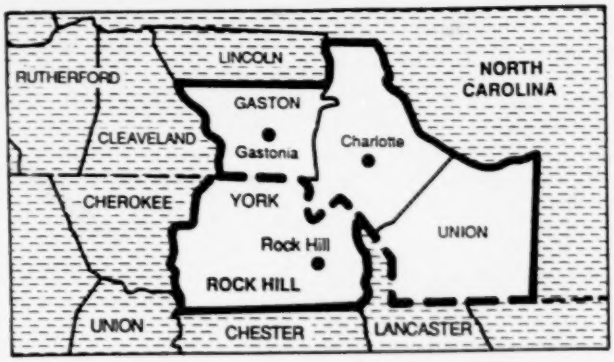
Before looking at education, a brief look needs to be taken at South Carolina's metropolitan areas. If we want to limit our view to those places defined by the government as MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Areas), there are seven, but we will limit ourselves to four: Charlotte, Columbia, Greenville-Spartanburg, and Charleston (see map below).

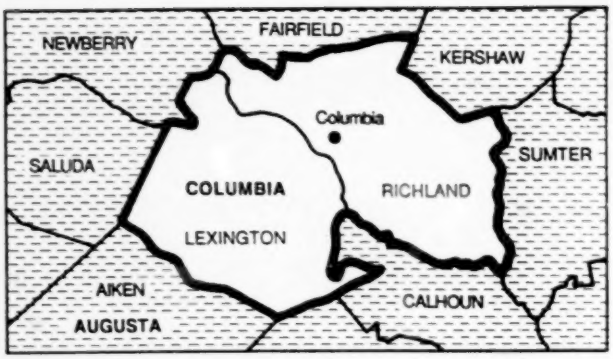
Four Most Important MSAs in South Carolina



Charlotte is known as the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill NC-SC MSA. Of its seven counties, only York is located in South Carolina. Although South Carolinians usually neglect this metro area in their planning, it is a strategic error, as we shall see. (Aiken County is a part of the Augusta MSA but seems to have less potential for influencing South Carolina.) Because metro areas are where growth, money and people are increasingly concentrated, more analysis is done of these places than any others. Let's look briefly at the four most important MSAs in South Carolina.

Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC





This is a moderately large metro of 1,127,700 people in 1989, ranking 42nd of the 100 largest metros in the nation. Of the 34 southern metropolitan statistical areas, it ranks 13th in size. The education of its 1989 work force of 655,000 is a key problem—it ranks 2nd of the 100 MSAs in adults without a high school diploma. (Even among the 34 southern MSAs it ranks second.) One of the major dampers on economic development recently was Hurricane Hugo—a major blow to Charlotte, directly in its path, and particularly to York County, which suffered over $22 million in damages. Because disaster money has been slow to arrive from the federal government as well as private insurance companies, future growth in this metro area may be altered.

Charlotte is important to South Carolina because of its attempts to shed its dependence on the ailing textile and apparel industries and move into the "high end" of the services by increasing business and financial services and attracting corporate headquarters. Charlotte has done very well in these areas. (Chief competitors are Atlanta and the Raleigh-Durham area.) Both NCNB and First Union Corporation, the largest financial institutions in North Carolina, are located there. Because the super-regional banking compact allows these institutions to expand OUTSIDE North Carolina, its implications for South Carolina's development are major.

In addition, its location, excellent highway, railway, the newly established inland port facility and air transport systems suggest major growth in trade and distribution services. Because discretionary incomes are fairly high, retail and consumer markets are increasing. Major problems are loss of jobs in textiles and apparel, as well as low educational levels in its work force. But growth of Charlotte will have significant impact on South Carolina's future, and a "southern strategy" needs to be developed between the governors of the two states.

Columbia, SC

One of the major advantages in being the state capital is the stability of the government work force! Almost one-quarter of the jobs in this two-county metro area are in government activity. Because governments require goods and services to be purchased, the number of jobs "upstream and downstream" of each government job is about three to one. In addition, Columbia is South Carolina's financial, insurance and business services center, many of these jobs providing services to government agencies.

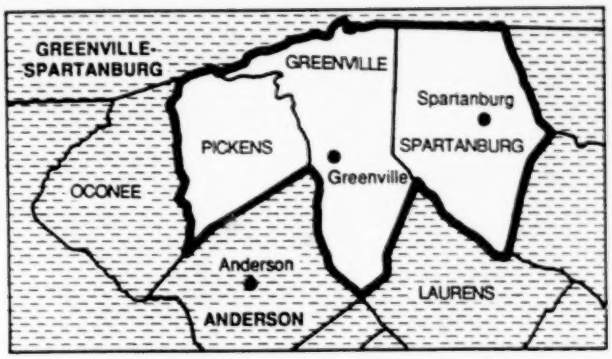
Its location in the middle of the state allows Columbia to be linked to north-south and east-west markets along Interstates 26, 20 and 77, providing one day access to 19 percent of the nation's urban markets. Because manufacturing has been a comparatively small part of Columbia's development, there is less to "undo" than in other parts of the state.

Its 455,000 residents in 1989 reflect a work force of 287,000 that is comparatively well educated—39 percent of its adult population have one or more years of college, ranking this metro 27th of the top 100 metros in the nation, and *6th* among the 34 southern MSAs. There is a large black population, about 29 percent, and a very small group of people over 65—only about 9 percent compared to 12 percent in the 100 MSAs.

Columbia's institutions of higher education enroll some 30,000 students, and the quality of life created by the University of South Carolina, the medical school, health and business services and access to cultural and recreational activity should allow Columbia to retain its educated citizens and, by having a large number of families with young children, increase its educational levels in the future. Although wage rates are not high, the cost of living is proportionately low. While growth rates have been slow compared to the city of Atlanta or the state of Florida, they have been steady. It may be that for the next decade, slow and steady growth will show some advantages over the "super-growth" MSAs that cannot keep up with themselves.

Greenville-Spartanburg, SC

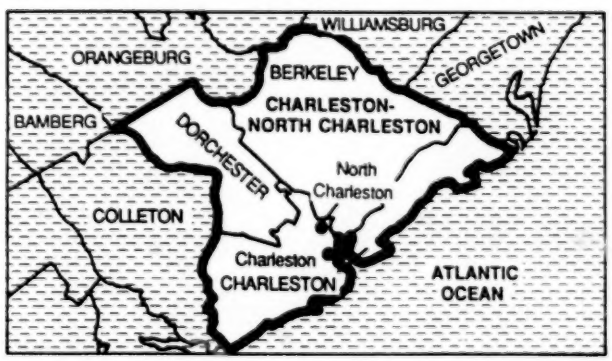
This metropolitan area with a 1989 population of 627,600 people has been "typical" in its dependence on textiles and apparel. However, due to some shrewd planning over the years, it has completed a successful transition to a diversified economy, mostly due to its ability to attract foreign and U.S. corporations. The appeal has



been to its high quality of life, resembling small town living in some ways, but with excellent access to recreation. Again, low wages are matched by low cost of living. Thus, retail markets here are high on necessities and lower on the (very profitable) luxury markets. Seventeen percent of the population is black (small for the state as a whole) while people over the age of 65 are a somewhat larger percentage here (11.8 percent) than in the state as a whole.

The work force has a classic pattern: *1st* of the 100 MSAs in the percentage of adults without a high school diploma (43 percent in 1989). With only 28 percent of adults having one or more years of college, the Greenville-Spartanburg area ranks 93rd of the 100 top MSAs, and 32nd of its 34 southern metro competitors. However, with the rapid increase in rubber, plastics, electronics and production machinery, there is something of a labor shortage in the MSA. Unemployment rates in 1989 touched 3.4 percent, the fourth lowest rate in the South. (Apparently, existing workers can be trained for the new manufacturing jobs fairly easily.) A larger problem may be the expansion of the "downstream" businesses: management and consulting, personnel, engineering, architecture, surveying, and other professions that go with economic growth. In fact, job growth in engineering, architecture and surveying has been over eight percent for the last three years. High paying business service jobs have also grown rapidly. It would be very bad if employers had to bring in workers from out of the state for these well-paying jobs if South Carolina could not "grow its own."

Charleston, SC



Although the "Queen of the South" to many, this city of about 68,000 has actually lost some population during the eighties. However, the MSA had reached 502,200 in 1987, up 16.7 percent from its 1980 total of 430,346. The increases have been largely in Berkeley and Dorchester counties, as well as Charleston County outside the city. Rich in history, Charleston is a major center for commercial shipping and has had a thriving tourism economy for many decades.

Unlike many areas in South Carolina, Charleston has a high rating on health care, ranking 41st of the top 100 MSAs on doctors per 100,000 population. Even in this cultured CITY, the METRO has only 15 percent of its adults who have one or more years of college. While it ranks 51st in *increase* in per capita income, it ranks 210th in per capita income! Only about 19,000 workers are engaged in manufacturing, a true indication of the great differences between lowland and upland areas of the state. Although one thinks of Charleston (the city) as a charming place to retire, the MSA ranks 247th in Social Security recipients. On the other hand, the MSA ranks 35th in the number of persons with incomes below the poverty line.

Charleston is one place in the state where retail sales look good. It ranks 40th in percent change in retail sales (up 70 percent from 1980–87) but only 228th in *dollars* of retail sales per capita, the old story of percentage gain but real number pain. Charleston's future will lie less with the lovely city, almost an anachronism given the fact that the city's population is only about 13 percent of the total MSA. The variation will be in Berkeley and Dorchester counties, with a higher population growth rate from 1980–87 than any other counties in the state, as well as the 230,000 people who live in the county of Charleston but not in the city.

Summary

Given the income levels in the state's MSAs, it is clear that rural poverty in the state's non-metro areas is a major issue in economic development. Because businesses are concentrated in MSAs, business support for the Education Improvement Act of 1984 will stress the metro area focus. Although most people in non-metro areas in South Carolina are working, they are working at very low-wage jobs.

One hundred years ago, the booming part of South Carolina would be the lowlands. Today, it would seem to be the Midlands-Piedmont areas, as the textile and apparel industries are supplemented by the growth areas of business and financial services, adding greatly to the middle class populations in those areas.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Now that we have a sense of the demographic context of the state, we can narrow our focus to the educational system itself. While the schools will reflect most of the demographic realities we have already described, they also have been the major instrument for the state's bootstrap operation during the eighties. Let's start with some basic data about the system as shown in Tables 2 and 3 on page 8.

The numbers paint a very interesting picture. First, there is a small "Baby Boomlet" in South Carolina, now working its way through elementary school, as seen in the opening enrollment figures. However, after the year 2000, youth populations in the state (and in the nation) decline, as seen in Table 3. The minority percentage in South Carolina remains almost constant, while the nation's minority youth move from 30 percent in 1990 to 38 percent in 2010. (There is little in-migration of blacks or other minorities into the state, and a static birth rate of the mostly black minority population, and little immigration from other nations to increase minority youth percentages.) If youth decline, as is the case in South Carolina and the nation, while the total population of state and nation are increasing, the inevitable result is a rapid aging of the population, with youth in short supply except for the brief "Boomlet" period.

South Carolina is one of a small number of states that actually increased the percentage of local tax contributions to education during the 1980s, while state and federal percentages declined. This should encourage more local participation in educational questions. In addition, teacher salaries and per pupil expenditures both went up during the eighties, improving the state's ranking in these two areas considerably. But the biggest and most impressive gain was in one of the better "level of effort" indicators—per pupil expenditures as a percent of per capita income. In a brief six-year period, South Carolina moved from 37th to 17th! (Note that the NUMBER of dollars per student is still small, but given the state's total number of dollars for ALL purposes, the level of effort in education is truly excellent.) In addition, the student-teacher ratio became more favorable, from 19 to 17, due partly to some enrollment declines early in the decade. However, note that the student-ADULT ratio is nine to one, meaning that for every teacher in South Carolina, there is about one non-teaching adult on the payroll.

On the percent of high school graduates who have taken Advanced Placement (AP) courses, the state moved from 17th to 6th in the nation, suggesting that the "high end" of secondary school graduates is good indeed. But until 1984, students could just take the courses without taking the (difficult) exams. The good news is that there was an increase in AP students earning college placement-credit from 1984 to 1989, and that the percentage of students scoring three or better on these difficult tests is among the highest in the nation. The bad news is that the average SAT score is on the bottom of the 22 states that use the test, and those that score over 600 (high) on either the verbal or math sections was the lowest of the 22 states using the SAT test in 1988.

The true irony here is that SAT scores IMPROVED by 48 points in South Carolina, making it FIRST in improvement of the 22 states, while the mean score itself had barely moved off the bottom (21st in 1989, 22nd in 1990). The South Carolina average SAT score in 1988 was 838 while the 22 state average was 906! It is very hard to win playing catch-up if you start at the back of the pack.

Part of the difficulty is the high percentage of students who are below the poverty line—8th highest in the nation. It is hard to imagine a strategy that would change this figure very rapidly. As a result, the improvement in the graduation rate was minimal in the state—youth poverty is always associated with high rates of school dropout. Although real progress has been made in the eighties in the expansion of the black middle class, there is still a great deal of black poverty in both the rural and the metro areas of South Carolina, and black students are 44 percent of the state's total public school enrollment. It's hard to imagine how South Carolina can improve without significant improvement in the lot of the state's black citizens. No one could fault the efforts being made, but the reduction of youth poverty proceeds at an agonizingly slow pace.

In looking at the data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, scores for black students have gained consistently during the decade, but the gap remains very wide indeed. It is important to understand that when we compare scores of students from wealthy backgrounds in any group with students from poor backgrounds of that same group, students from wealthy backgrounds always do better. In predicting school achievement, class (socio-economic status) is a better predictor than race, as Figure 1 on page 9 illustrates.

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Thus, in interpreting performance data in South Carolina, we must assume that if more black families were able to move into the middle class, the educational attainment of their children would rise. (Recent research indicates that the best single predictor of success in college is whether or not the parents were college graduates. It is a better predictor than high school grades or SAT scores.)

The Education Improvement Act of 1984

The comprehensiveness of this major legislation is most unusual. The strategy of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) included separate efforts to improve student performance directly, to improve teacher performance and morale as well as salary, to better prepare administrators and to update the skills of present administrators. Very specific testing programs were set to measure quality of performance, and (MOST unusual) a series of incentives were set to reward students, teachers, administrators and districts for superior performance. In addition, a series of indicators were established to see whether performance was on track, and how people felt about what was going on. Although this report is not intended as a comprehensive assessment of the Act, some comments may be useful, given the author's involvement in education reform efforts.

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Table 2
SOUTH CAROLINA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

	1983–84		1988–89	
Public School Enrollment:				
Elementary	420,000		438,600	
Secondary	180,800		176,900	
Total Students	600,800		615,500	
School Funds:				
Federal	12.0%		8.0%	
State	59.3%		54.5%	
Local	28.6%		37.5%	
		Rank		**Rank**
Average Teacher Salary	$17,500	45th	$25,060	34th
Per Pupil Expenditures	$ 2,431	44th	$ 3,465	41th
Expenditures (as percent of per capita income)	21.9%	37th	27.0%	17th
	1982		**1989**	
Student-Teacher Ratio	19.0 to 1	33rd	17.2 to 1	30th
Graduation Rate	63.8%	42nd	64.6% (1988)	45th
			66.9% (1989)	40th
Schools Offering Advanced Placement (as a percent of all schools)	26.9%	22nd	65.5%	5th
Percent Seniors Taking AP	5.1%	17th	17.5%	6th
Percent Scoring Three and Higher on AP			12.8% (1988)	8th
			13.1% (1989)	7th
SAT Score	790	(22nd of 22 States)	838	(21st of 22 States)
Minority Students (as a percent of all students), 1987	45.0%	7th		
Poverty Students (as a percent of all students), 1980	20.7%	8th		
Handicapped Students (as a percent of all students), 1988	12.2%	14th		

Source: State ranks are taken from the U.S. Department of Education's *State Education Performance Chart*, May 1990. Other data are from National School Boards Association, *Education Vital Signs, 1989*.

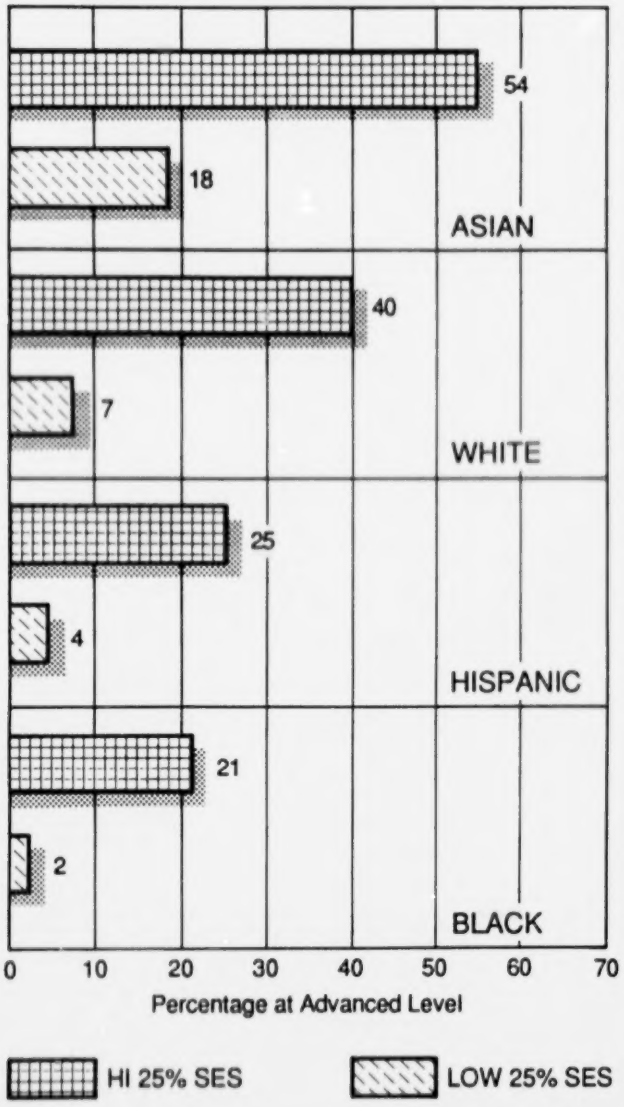
Table 3
CHILDREN IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE UNITED STATES

	1990	2000	2010
Number of Children Age 0–18 Years, South Carolina	946,000	968,000	931,000
Percent Minority	39.9%	39.6%	40.1%
Total South Carolina Population	3,549,000	3,906,000	4,205,000
Total Children Age 0–18 Years, United States	64,031,000	65,717,000	62,644,000
Percent Minority	30.7%	34.0%	38.2%
Total U.S. Population	249,891,000	267,747,000	282,055,000

Source: *American Demographics*, May 1989.

Figure 1

Percentage of Eighth Graders in Low and High Socio-economic Groups Who Are Proficient in Advanced Mathematics, by Race and Ethnicity, 1988



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, A Profile of the American Eighth Grader.*

After only five years of operation (a blink of an eye in educational time), a thorough appraisal showed that the program had achieved or exceeded its objectives in almost every area. Particularly encouraging were the student test results on minimum basic skills standards, CTBS test score gains, gains on the SAT. (Only student absences per day and high school graduation rate improvements fell short of the goal.) More students are taking challenging college preparatory courses, more students are passing the exit exam required for high school graduation (now up to 94 percent) and increases in Advanced Placement we have already discussed.

While these test gains are cause for celebration, there is another achievement which may be even more important in the long run—SOUTH CAROLINA'S TEACHERS ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND THE REFORMS. In most other states, education reform has come from the governor's office and has been driven straight down to the individual classroom, with little chance for the individual teacher or administrator to "buy in" to the program. It is in the classroom where the "educational rubber" meets the "educational road," and in many reform efforts, the classroom is the one place untouched. One gets the impression that in South Carolina, classrooms and schools are BEHAVING differently as a result of the implementation of the Act. This is a most unusual achievement.

It also suggests that the NEXT set of goals, for the year 2000—cut the dropout rate in half, increase college attendance and workplace-ready skills, increase readiness for first grade and develop greater problem solving and creative thinking skills—could be achieved, because the teachers and administrators who are the only ones who can accomplish them are on deck and ready to go. This is probably the most skillfully implemented state-based program in the nation, but it is only half complete. Until the high school graduation rates go up (increased access to good jobs for a larger share of South Carolina's youth and increased college attendance rates, both adding to the state's future middle class) the reforms that have been accomplished will have little long term effect. Fortunately, with teachers, administrators, as well as the business leadership of the state behind the educational reform effort, it would appear that the goals for 2000 can (indeed MUST) be achieved.

Higher Education in South Carolina

The lack of a diversified economy during this century has led the state away from the development of a comprehensive system of higher education. But during the last two decades, the number of public four-year institutions doubled to twelve, while community colleges had reached a total of 21. Many institutions had developed the practice of going directly to key members of the General Assembly for funds, a tactic not unknown in other states but brought to a fine art in the south.

Under former Governor Riley, South Carolina dug into the issue of school reform as few other states have. As a result, during the 1984–88 period, higher education in the Palmetto State suffered a decline in percentage of state funds for higher education. However, in 1988 the state passed the "Cutting Edge" initiative, designed to support new research efforts, provide endowed professorships and increase the power of the Commission on Higher Education in the areas of academic policy and institutional budgetary approval. While institutions seemed pleased with the new package, it has been hard for some to give up the effective practice of going directly to their friends in the legislature for money and submit their requests to the Commission like everybody else.

The resignation of the president of the University of South Carolina in May 1990 (under questionable circumstances) did not help higher education during this crucial

time. At this writing no one can be sure what impact this event will have on the future of higher education, but the timing, right on the heels of the "Cutting Edge" initiative, could hardly be worse. At this time, two crucial tasks are the enhancement of relations between public and private institutions in the state, and the increase in enrollment of black students. Table 4 shows some of the higher education numbers.

This picture shows a state system which is diverse but not large enough to cover the range of educational needs in the state. When (not if) the second phase of the EIA is in place, an increasing pool of well-trained high school graduates will be seeking admission to South Carolina's institutions of higher education. The system will clearly need expansion in places and programs. There are enough untenured faculty positions to guarantee some flexibility in that department (see Table 5). A 21 percent minority enrollment would be high for many states, but with a 45 percent minority youth enrollment in the state, it is clearly not enough. Women faculty members are a little better represented in South Carolina than in the nation as a whole. (Another source suggests that the percentage of minority *faculty* is low, but comparisons are hard to develop well.)

There are a number of exciting things going on in the state. The largest conference focussing on the freshman year is held at the University of South Carolina at Columbia, so popular that it is also put on at sites around the nation. Of the 2,000 or so business schools in America, only seven have developed an internationally-oriented MBA program, requiring foreign language experience as well as some experience working in a foreign country. They are Penn., Duke, NYU, Michigan State, Georgetown, Virginia *and* the University of South Carolina. Programs like these two do help to put the state on the higher education map.

One hopes that legislators and governors in this state will see that their educational system is one whole unit, from pre-school to graduate school. (Texas seems to think that it can run a world-class flagship university and not worry about anything that feeds into it. Good luck to them.) The Education Improvement Act is great stuff. So is the "Cutting Edge" legislation. If the state's leadership can keep a picture of the whole educational system in their heads, it may be that education can fulfill its promise in South Carolina to enrich the lives of each and every citizen.

Table 4
NUMBER OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT, 1988

	Number of Institutions		Student Enrollment
Public Four-Year Institutions	12		74,799
Public Two-Year Institutions	21		38,553
Private Four-Year Institutions	20		22,381
Private Two-Year Institutions	11		5,108
Total Institutions	64	Total Enrollment	140,841
Vocational Institutions	66		
Full-time Students (as a percent of all students)	68.5%		
Minority Students	21.3%		

Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education, *Almanac*, September 6, 1989.

Table 5
HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY, 1988

Percent Women Faculty, Public Institutions	31.9%
Percent Women Faculty, Private Institutions	33.6%
Percent Tenured Faculty, Public Institutions	58.0%
Percent Tenured Faculty, Private Institutions	55.7%

Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education, *Almanac*, September 6, 1989.

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SOUTH CAROLINA: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"Halfway Home and a Long Way to Go" was business leader Bob Selman's apt description of South Carolina in 1990. He and his business colleagues were vital to the passage of the Education Improvement Act of 1984, and have stayed very much involved since then. The road the state has travelled since 1984 has been exceptional—teacher salaries have increased far more than the national average. Test scores are up. Administrators are better skilled. But so far, there is an irony in much of the improvement—for example, the state had the greatest *gain* in SAT scores from 1983–89 (up 48 points) but in 1990 the state's average SAT score of 838 was still the lowest of any of the 22 states using the SAT. In most economic measures, the state is clearly off the bottom—new jobs have been created at a rapid rate, per capita income has increased rapidly (even though the number of dollars is still low), and an estimated 96,000 people moved to South Carolina from 1980–1986, mostly well-educated people with a variety of job skills.

But underneath the improvements lie some of the most difficult demographic conditions to be found. If THEY don't change, the current progress will amount to little. The root problems are:

- Very high poverty rates, especially among children and 40 percent of the state's citizens who live in rural areas.
- Large numbers of children born at risk of dying as infants, of being raised by a teenage mother or an unmarried mother and susceptible to drugs, crime and unemployment.
- A poorly educated adult population unable to be role models.
- A job structure with a large number of low-pay and low skill jobs.

The stunning successes of the Education Improvement Act have not yet made much impact on these core problems. For that reason, "Target 2000" is not an option, it is a necessity. Special focus must be kept on the following goals:

1. **Major increases must be made in high school and college completion rates.** Over 80 percent of our (many) prisoners are high school dropouts. The illegal drug industry (for that is what it is) could not survive without a plentiful supply of high school dropouts, who are attracted to a "career" in drugs because they have no other choice. High school graduates get good jobs, stay out of jail, pay taxes, and raise successful children at a high rate of incidence. In addition, they don't kill themselves and others in traffic accidents and at home because they can READ the traffic signs on the road and the directions on the medicine bottles at home. In looking at our four root problems above, the best SINGLE answer is an increase in education, at all levels and for all ages. (About 200,000 adults in the state who are not high school graduates could pass a GED equivalency test, with enormous benefits to themselves and the state. And while businesses may be attracted to South Carolina by the low wage rates, they would be MORE attracted if a big increase in college graduates suggested a more sophisticated work force that would have to be paid well, increasing the state's ability to CREATE good new jobs.)

2. **The state's teachers cannot teach sick children. Health and education are natural partners in that if one succeeds, the other benefits. Housing, transportation, justice and social welfare are also part of the "team."** Dealing with our four root problems will require a coordinated approach of all social services at the local and state levels—after all, they all serve *the same clients!* In addition, the recent "Cutting Edge" initiatives for higher education should be seen as an opportunity, not a threat. If the legislature understands that education is a seamless web, pre-school to graduate school, and that failure anywhere in the web causes failures in other sectors, then ALL of education needs support just as local coalitions of education, health, social work and housing leaders can create local successes, as it is in individual communities that the rubber meets the road.

3. **During the next crucial decade in South Carolina, money and staff must be earmarked for those activities that will DIRECTLY improve high school and college graduation rates, especially for youth currently in poverty, regardless of race.** No one in South Carolina benefits from a young person's dropping out of high school, in fact, we can price the consequences—over $20,000 a year for a prisoner, up to $100,000 a year for a handicapped child whose handicap could have been prevented if the mother had taken a $30 physical exam during the first trimester of pregnancy, and $40,000 to get a child born to a crack-addicted mother ready for kindergarten. Prevention is cheap and effective, "cures" are expensive and ineffective, yet most of our money goes to prisons, unemployment benefits and clinics for teenage mothers. The best prevention program would be for communities in South Carolina to adopt the strategy now in use in Greeley, Colorado and Springfield, Missouri—to ELIMINATE school dropouts before the year 2000.